

Arlington County Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS.
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.

Minutes (Revised 2020.10.28, Approved with revisions 2020.11.04, final minor edits [DP]
11.09.2020)

Attendees: Eric Goldstein, Chair; Chris Yarie, Vice Chair; Pamela Van Hine, Recording Secretary; John Armstrong; Ian Blackwell; Jim Feaster; Elizabeth Gallagher; Gail Ginsburg; Eric Goodman; Tom Korn; Andrea Walker; David Patton, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planner; Mary Dallao, Walk Arlington Program Manager

Guest Speakers: Dennis Leach, Director, Division of Transportation; Jeremy Hassan, Water, Sewer, and Streets Bureau, DES

Other Staff: Hui Wang, Bureau Chief, TE&O; Leah Gerber, Active Transportation Coordinator

Other Guests: Neal Hunter, PRC; Rob Mandle, National Landing BID; Michelle Brydges; Patrick Kenney

The Chair called the virtual meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. and welcomed members, staff, and guests. There were no public comments. The Chair gave a brief report, thanking members of the PAC who volunteered to serve as liaisons/representatives to various County working groups, including the Pershing Drive LRPC GLUP [ed. DP] and the Clarendon Sector Plan Update. He also noted that he would be the PAC rep [ed. DP] at a Police Practices Group roundtable on traffic enforcement. Lastly, the Chair reminded the committee that the PAC would be meeting on November 4, 2020 instead of the usual date, due to a conflict with Veteran's Day.

FY'21 Funding for Sidewalk Inventory/Assessment: Jeremy Hassan, Water, Sewer, and Streets Bureau, DES:

The speaker reviewed the goal, scope, and funding for this new County program. The goal is to get from reacting to reported sidewalk problems and making repairs in an inefficient case-by-case way to being proactive and data-driven in their management, which should make sidewalk repair cheaper, faster, and a smoother process. The first steps, which this funding covers, are having consultants design the database and gather geolocation data on conditions of existing sidewalk. The initial program will only cover existing sidewalks in the public right of way and exclude trails, paths, and some privately maintained sidewalks. Some missing link data may be gathered during the process. PAC members offered to help gather data. The \$300,000 is for the initial project – setting up the database and gathering data. Repairs and other sidewalk improvements are separately funded.

Transportation during COVID: Dennis Leach, Director, Division of Transportation:

The Director reviewed the disparity of impacts of COVID-19 by age, race/ethnicity, neighborhood in Arlington, as well as the disparity of economic impacts. He then quickly reviewed the County's transportation staff's response to Covid. Keeping transit running was critical to support the transportation needs of essential workers who may not have access to affordable transportation alternatives. ART and Metroway buses were kept running, albeit on a reduced schedule in some cases. To keep both bus drivers and transit riders safe, staff had riders enter towards the back of the bus, ride for free, keep riders away from the driver and each other, and maintain bus cleanliness. As restaurants and other

businesses started to open up, staff also developed PUDO zones and restaurant outdoor seating areas in parking spaces and sometimes onto sidewalks.

One pedestrian safety improvement was to implement automated ped signal phasing in all urban corridors and other locations with high ped volume. Transportation work was hampered by safety concerns and financial challenges, including loss of transit revenue. The presenters also promoted transportation projects that were completed during Covid-time, such as Clarendon Circle, the Lynn Street Esplanade, Custis Trail, and Potomac Avenue. Current urgent transportation planning is directed towards developing and implementing safe transportation plans for getting children back to school. Many of these projects will make street crossings safer for all pedestrians, such as improvements at Manchester. Continuing challenges include health and safety, transportation trends, and financial impacts.

The Director and Bureau Chief of TE&O then focused on why the County did not “open up the streets” this spring for bike-ped access. Their points included that keeping transit running for essential employees was a higher priority and that they did not have sufficient signs and marking crew or police officers to open any streets safely. They did review various proposals submitted and found that all of the suggested streets had too many competing uses that needed to be maintained, especially for bus routes, PUDO, and emergency vehicle access. They also stated that providing temporary solutions – both in time and in materials – was not cost-effective. It's ultimately cheaper to put in more permanent barriers (special curbs) than temporary bollards and cones, which need more staff attention. The County also had a shortage of traffic cones and bollards. Finally, they felt that the proposed routes might not be truly equitable – a new focus for County decision-making. PAC members challenged the speakers on many of their points, which were also raised at the recent Transportation Commission and BAC meetings. D. Leach's presentation is available through this meeting's YouTube [link](#); Slide 15 covers the County response for street closures.

[Walk Arlington](#) Update: Mary Dallao, Walk Arlington Program Manager:

The speaker promoted the [8-week walking challenge](#) which starts next week. Find more information and sign up through this link:

She also mentioned a Children's Story Walk using the Sidewalk App. You can find all of the WalkArlington walks using this app here:

<http://www.walkarlington.com/walkabouts-maps/>

PAC Business:

- *Approval of draft BAC-PAC minutes from September 9, 2020 meeting:* The Chair recommended that approval be postponed until the November meeting because the draft had not been sent to committee members.
- *Membership and Officers:* The Chair asked that all current members who wished to continue their membership for another two years send a message to D. Patton and to him. The Chair also noted that he hopes to continue as Chair for one more year and seeks applicants to begin serving as Vice Chair at the end of this year and then begin serving as Chair at the end of next year. If interested, please let him know ASAP.

General Updates:

- [Vision Zero](#) (Eric Goldstein, PAC Rep): The Chair encouraged PAC members to participate in the current [public engagement](#) on the Vision Zero project, due October 30. Report all of the crossings and sidewalk infrastructures that you find

unsafe on the map in the survey! Goals for Action Plan are due to be finalized for the November meeting, with final plan to be completed in 2021.

- *Lee Highway Alliance (Gail Ginsburg, PAC Rep)*: Ms. Ginsburg noted that the LHA has been working, slowly, on Lee Highway since 2016. Challenges include no safe crossings for pedestrians, no safe lanes for cyclists, and limited ROW for improvements. But bike-ped improvements are being planned. Visit the LHA website to learn more: <https://www.leehighwayalliance.com/>
- *Route 1 (Pamela Van Hine, PAC Rep VDOT Task Force)*: The [transportation section](#) of the Northern Virginia (NOVA) proposal to Amazon mentions improvements to Route 1 in the Crystal City-Pentagon City area, where HQ2 will be located. In response, VDOT has initiated the [Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study](#), a feasibility study that will compare bringing Route 1 “down to grade” at 15th and at 18th to implementing safety and other improvements - while keeping Route 1 elevated - and to following the guidance in the Crystal City Sector Plan, which keeps Route 1 elevated, but moves the ramps to the center of the lanes, thus creating more buildable land. The 38 project Task force members will primarily serve as conduits for information and opinions between VDOT and their constituents. A community survey will be released soon - see this [link](#), due November 15, with other opportunities for community involvement coming in 2021. Meanwhile the community-led [Livability 22202 Working Group on Route 1](#) has held two public meetings and ran a [community survey](#). R. Mandel of the National Landing BID spoke about their new report “[Reimagining Route 1](#)” – with the goal to start a conversation with relevant parties on how to improve access and safety and mend the fabric of the separated neighborhoods. All of the sample concepts in the BID report start by bringing Route 1 down to grade. Find more information on the BID study [here](#).

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:04 P.M. The next PAC meeting will be Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 7 P.M. The primary topic will be an update on the County Vision Zero program. Watch for meeting announcement, with draft agenda and information on how to participate virtually.